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REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of his telephone call to Applicants' representative regarding the Examiner's restriction requirement, and for the further courtesy of allowing Applicants' representative to send the present Preliminary Amendment by facsimile.

Entry of the present Preliminary Amendment prior to examination is respectfully requested. Applicants' representative apologizes for the Preliminary Amendment not having been submitted earlier because Applicants' representative had not reviewed the claims prior to the Examiner's restriction requirement.

The amendments to claims 1 through 19 are being made to improve the clarity of the claims, and no new matter is being added. Parenthetical phrases have been deleted from claims 16, 17 and 22. Claims 21-23, which were originally filed as "use" claims, have been rewritten as product claims.

New claims 24 through 30 are being added to recite specific embodiments of the present invention that were recited in claims 11, 18, and 21 as filed. Applicants submit that the new claims do not introduce any new matter, but are only being added for clarity and to ensure that the claims are all written in proper form.

In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on February 16, Applicants' representative was asked by the Examiner to elect to prosecute either Group I, claims 1 through 19, or Group II, claims 20 through 23. Claims 1 through 19 were elected. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the restriction requirement in view of the present Preliminary Amendment. Applicants submit that claims 20-23, now directed to products formed by the process of claim 1 and claims dependent therefrom, can be examined together because a search directed to the subject matter of the present process claims would also cover the subject matter of the product claims. Should the Examiner decline Applicants' request, Applicants elect claims 1 through 19, as amended, with traverse. Applicants also respectfully request that new dependent claims 24 through 30 be examined with claims 1 through 19, if the Examiner maintains the restriction requirement.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all of claims 1 through 30 are patentable and in condition for allowance. Accordingly, In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested. If there are remaining issues to be resolved prior to examination of the claims, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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